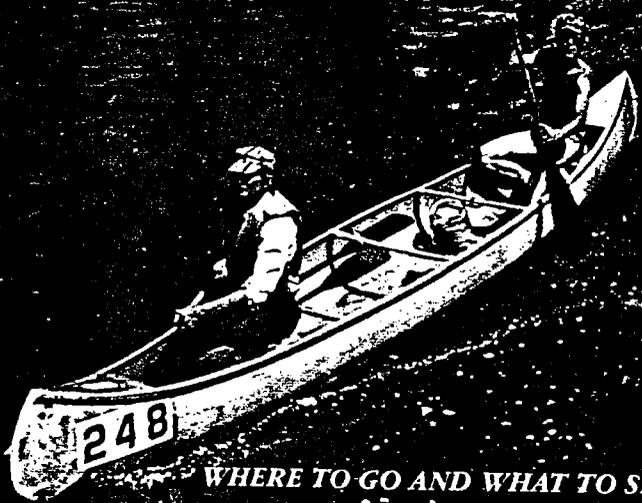


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WHERE TO GO AND WHAT TO SEE
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Canoeing on the Fox River
Photo courtesy Illinois Office of Tourism

CANOEING (Cont.)

As the forests were harvested, the swamp area was reclaimed for farming by the construction of drainage ditches. Many of the early farmers were slaves who had come north and settled in small communities called Perks. Later, the town of Perks was established and named for these small settlements.

If the creek is low, begin your trip at or below Karnak. It is 4 to 5 hours paddling time from Karnak to the bridge on the road south of Perks. There is a bridge on the blacktop road west from Mounds to Routes 3 and 127. One can get off the highway here in dry weather and drive fairly close to the river on the west side south of the bridge. Avoid the bridges on Route 37 and Route 51. Below here, the river becomes intermittent, due to diversion structures.

The river flows through private land, and permission for camping must be obtained from the landowner. The river is small enough that motorboating is not a hazard, and in spite of the silt in the water, the unique character of the cypress swamp makes the Cache a fine, recreational stream.

Canoeists coming to the Cache country should allow sufficient time for visits to the Horseshoe Lake Conservation Area, the Pine Hills Conservation Area, and the Shawnee National Forest.

THE CALUMET RIVER

The Calumet River system consists of three branches, the Calumet (which lies between Calumet Harbor just north of Routes 12 and 20 and east of Route 41, and its confluence with the Grand Calumet and the Little Calumet just off alternate Route 30 (Torrence) and 138th Street), the Grand Calumet (which runs from the mouth of the Calumet eastward to the Indiana state line), and the Little Calumet which flows west to the Calumet Sag Channel, then back southeast past the Calumet Boating Center, Calumet Woods, Kickapoo Meadows Forest Preserve and on eastward to the Indiana line.

These branches are considered public and navigable. There is little current, the water is deep enough for canoeing in all seasons and most of the segments are scenic and interesting.

It is impossible to include a comprehensive map of such a large metropolitan area in a publication of this type, therefore it is suggested that canoeists unacquainted with the city use a Chicago Area Street Map to plan your trip.

The Calumet has a considerable amount of large boat traffic which may be a problem for canoeists; particularly north of Lake Calumet. However, the river is wide enough for plenty of passing room and the large boat operators that use the Calumet Harbor in Lake Calumet normally do not travel at high speeds.

It is about 5 miles from the harbor to the entrance to Lake Calumet and a little over 1 mile on south to the junction with the other two branches.

Look this river over before you tackle it as it is very different from most other Illinois streams.

Only a little over 2 miles of the section known as the Grand Calumet lies in Illinois. Most of this segment flows through Burnam and on past the Burnam Woods Golf Course. This section is fine for a short trip of it can be combined with one of the other branches for a longer paddle. The river is interesting and generally clean, although there are some areas where debris has been dumped. There is a boat yard at Burnam and sometimes traffic is heavy.

The Little Calumet is favored by many as being one of the better streams in the area. It is about 6 miles from its confluence with the Calumet to the Calumet Sag Channel, and another 13 miles on to the Indiana state line. This is a beautiful and gentle stream and a favorite with many boaters. The section between the junction at the Calumet and Riverdale flows past numerous golf courses and forest preserves, most of which are possible accesses.

These streams are extremely important to canoeists living in the Chicago area, most of whom are acquainted with the streets and park areas. Canoeists from rural sections of the state will have a more difficult problem finding suitable access points and parking facilities. However, the trip is worth the problems, most of which can be easily solved with help from the natives who are most friendly and helpful to strangers.

THE CALUMET SAG CHANNEL

The Calumet Sag Channel flows between its junction with the Little Calumet River and its confluence with the Illinois and Michigan Canal, a distance of about 15 miles. It parallels Cal Sag Road which facilitates auto travel for pick-up. This distance makes a good one-day trip, and allows time to picnic and enjoy the scenery as there are no obstructions to portage and no hazardous segments of the Channel. The lower portion flows through Palos Hills which is a scenic area. There are no facilities for camping or for wood fire cookery, therefore it will be necessary to carry prepared lunches.

Boat traffic may be heavy and some of the boats are large, with a potentially dangerous wake. Give commercial traffic plenty of room as they cannot dodge or stop to avoid hitting you.

There are several good access points, one of which is at the intersection of the stream with Route 50 between Alsip and Crestwood. Others are shown on the Chicago Area Street Map. Take out at Archer and Route 83.

THE CHICAGO RIVER AND THE NORTH SHORE CHANNEL

The Chicago River and the North Shore Channel are bounded by extensive public lands, are generally fine canoe streams and are of extreme value to canoeists living in the Chicago metropolitan area.

The Chicago River can be canoed from Lake County to the Sanitary and Ship Canal. However it is most enjoyable in the northernmost 17 miles, beginning at the Skokie Lagoons east of I 94 at Glenview. From the lagoons to the junction with the North Shore Channel at Foster Street, the river meanders through a series of forest preserves and city parks. The best accesses are at Willow Road Dam, Lake Street, Beckwith Road and the Whealan Swimming Pool parking lot on Devon Avenue.

Between the Willow Road Dam and Beckwith Road there are numerous log jams, some of which have to be portaged, and some areas of broken concrete from ruined bridges which may be a hazard as well as a nuisance. There are also 3 dams requiring portage and a series of riffles which may have to be waded.

Beginners will find the Skokie Lagoons a good practice area. A complete circuit around the connecting channels is about 6 miles and is a very scenic trip, especially in the autumn. It is a good one

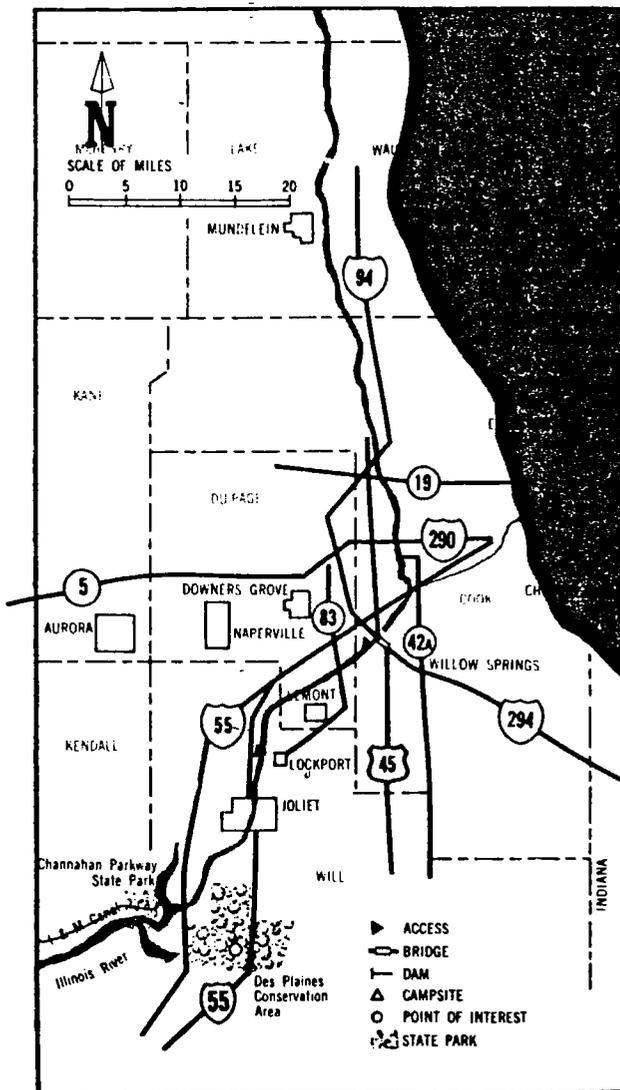
Several large and beautiful parks border the river. Bring lunches and water and select an area that can be canoed in the time available to you. Consult a Chicago Street Map with the parks and preserves indicated in making your plans. The channel is open and deep enough for pleasant canoeing.

THE DES PLAINES RIVER

The Des Plaines River flows from northern Lake County through Cook, DuPage and Will Counties. In Will County it joins with the Kankakee to form the Illinois River. Below the bridge on route 176 east of Libertyville there are a series of check dams which are dangerous and should be portaged. There are no warning signs, the current is swift and the dams are not noticeable until you are 20 to 30 feet from them unless you watch very carefully.

The river varies in depth from 2 to 10 feet and the lower reaches are about 100 feet wide. Both banks and bottom are muddy, especially in the Willow Springs area, but the banks become more rocky as you go downstream toward Lemont Road. The banks are wooded except for a few marshy areas.

In spite of the nearness to large cities, the area through which this section of the stream flows does not give the effect of crowding. The stream, however, is heavily polluted and the relative quality for canoeing is poor. It is difficult to locate the exact boundaries of the public lands bordering the river as they are not marked, and some city maps do not show them. There is a sunken bridge at the golf course just north of state Route 132 west of Gurnee and a private road bridge two miles north of Route 137, both of which will require portage. Brush piles in the stream and overhanging trees are a nuisance and may be a hazard.



A log jam and protruding rocks just above the lake near the Route 53 and Route 7 intersection create a hazard. Take the chute on the right and watch for overhanging limbs and brush. Canoe reports indicate the best route through the lake is on the left through a narrow chute below which you may encounter considerable turbulence. There are remains of an old bridge just above the new bridge which, at high water levels, may be covered making a dip and falls which are extremely hazardous. The area is not marked and extreme caution is mandatory. There is no good place to take a break under the new bridge. Canoe it only at low